



No. 98 Rs. 3.50

# PUNDALIK

## AND SAKHU



TWO FAMOUS SAINTS OF MAHARASHTRA

Prabhakar  
Chavalkar

Twice a year on the Ekadashis of the months of Ashadh (around August) and Kartik (around April), pilgrims from far and near come to Pandharpur, a famous pilgrim centre in Maharashtra, known for its Vithoba temple. These pilgrims are called 'Varkaris' and their pilgrimage —a 'Var'.

The deity of the temple, Vithoba, also called Vithal or *Panduranga* by his devotees at Pandharpur, is none other than Shri Vishnu or Krishna.

Pundalik was the man who caused Sri Vishnu to stay at Pandharpur. People are so grateful to Pundalik that they visit his Samadhi (which is about a furlong away from the temple), before they seek the blessings of Vithal.

*Saint Sakhu was a great devotee of Panduranga and is a well-known saint of Maharashtra.*

*It is believed that she was staying in Karhad near the confluence of the rivers, Krishna and Koyna, where stands to this day a built-up embankment named after her.. She probably lived during the time of the first Peshwa of the Marathas.*

*Her silent suffering and her unflinching devotion for Panduranga have endeared her to every Maharashtra.*

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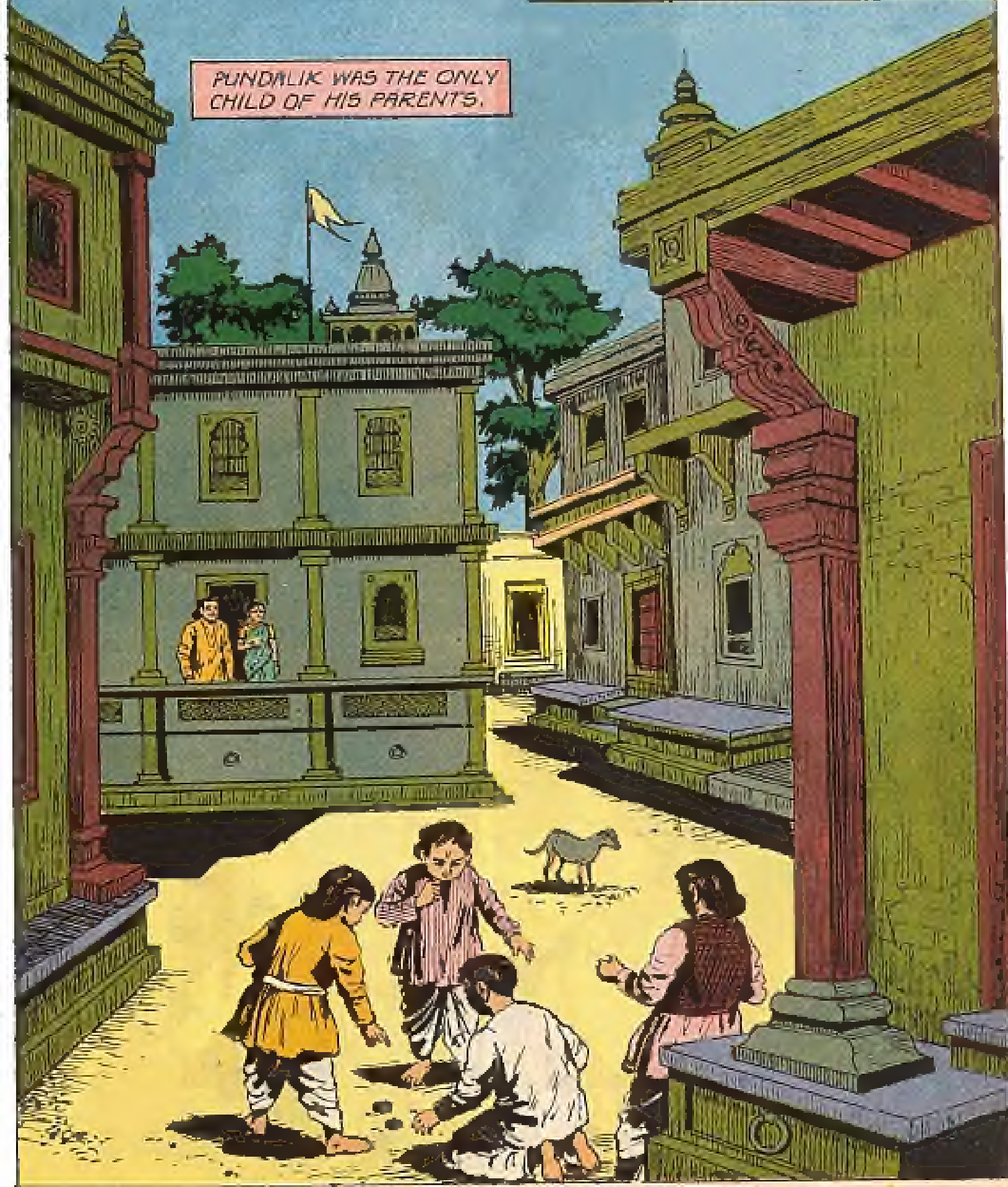
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**Script: Shobha Gangolli & Malati Deshpande**

**Illustrations: Prabhakar Khanolkar**

# PUNDALIK

PUNDALIK WAS THE ONLY  
CHILD OF HIS PARENTS.



HE WAS BROUGHT UP WITH GREAT LOVE AND AFFECTION. BUT AS HE GREW OLDER, HE FELL INTO BAD COMPANY.

ALAS, WE BELIEVED THAT OUR SON WOULD TAKE CARE OF US IN OUR OLD AGE. BUT HE DOESN'T EVEN SPEAK POLITELY TO US.



HE SPENT ALL HIS TIME GAMBLING.

OH NO! I'VE LOST AGAIN! I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY WITH ME NOW.

I'LL LEND YOU SOME.



HE WAS FOND OF HIS WORTHLESS FRIENDS.

LET'S BE MERRY. LIFE IS FULL OF FUN.

YES, MY FRIEND. LIVE FOR TODAY. WHY THINK OF TOMORROW?



HE WAS HEARTLESS AND MEAN TO THOSE AT HOME.

PUNDALIK, YOU HAVE SPENT ALL THE MONEY THAT WE HAD. PLEASE COME TO YOUR SENSES, MY SON.

DON'T YOU DARE TELL ME WHAT TO DO! IF YOU DON'T HAVE MONEY, GIVE ME YOUR GOLD!





WITH ALL THEIR WEALTH GONE, HIS POOR MOTHER HAD TO RESORT TO BEGGING.

PLEASE LEND ME A LITTLE RICE. I WILL RETURN IT TO YOU AS SOON AS I CAN.

TAYI, TAKE THIS RICE. I AM GLAD TO HELP YOU.

POOR LADY, HOW SHE MUST SUFFER.

THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SON IS MAKING LIFE MISERABLE FOR THEM.

I CANNOT LIVE SUCH A LIFE ANY LONGER. IT IS BETTER TO DIE THAN TO HAVE TO BEG FOR A LIVING.

YES, MY DEAR. WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE. MY PATIENCE TOO IS AT AN END. PUNDALIK WILL NEVER REFORM. WE WILL GO AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE TO KASHI.

SO, THE NEXT DAY, WHEN PUNDALIK WAS AWAY WITH HIS FRIENDS -

MOTHER, LET ME COME WITH YOU.

NO, MY CHILD. YOUR PLACE IS BY YOUR HUSBAND. SERVE HIM WELL. MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

A LITTLE LATER, PUNDALIK RETURNED HOME.

WHERE IS MOTHER?

THEY HAVE  
GONE ON A  
PILGRIMAGE  
TO KASHI.

WELL, LET THEM  
GO. I AM HUNGRY.  
GIVE ME SOME-  
THING TO EAT.

THERE IS NOT A  
SINGLE MORSEL  
OF FOOD IN  
THE HOUSE.

THEN GO AND  
BORROW SOME  
FROM THE  
NEIGHBOURS.

I TRIED, BUT THEY  
REFUSE. THEY  
LOVED YOUR  
PARENTS. NOW THAT  
THEY ARE GONE,  
NOBODY WANTS TO  
HELP US.

PUNDALIK WAS NOT IN THE LEAST PERTURBED, HE WENT TO THE MONEYLENDER. BUT—

BEGONE. I SHALL NO  
LONGER LEND YOU  
ANY MONEY. YOUR  
PARENTS HAVE LEFT,  
WHO WILL REPAY  
THE LOANS?

EVEN HIS FRIENDS AVOIDED HIM,  
NOW THAT HE HAD NO MONEY.

I AM SORRY,  
PUNDALIK, I MYSELF  
AM IN NEED  
OF MONEY.

WE'D BETTER  
GO AWAY BEFORE  
HE ASKS US!

AT LAST, PUNDALIK REALISED THE TRUTH.

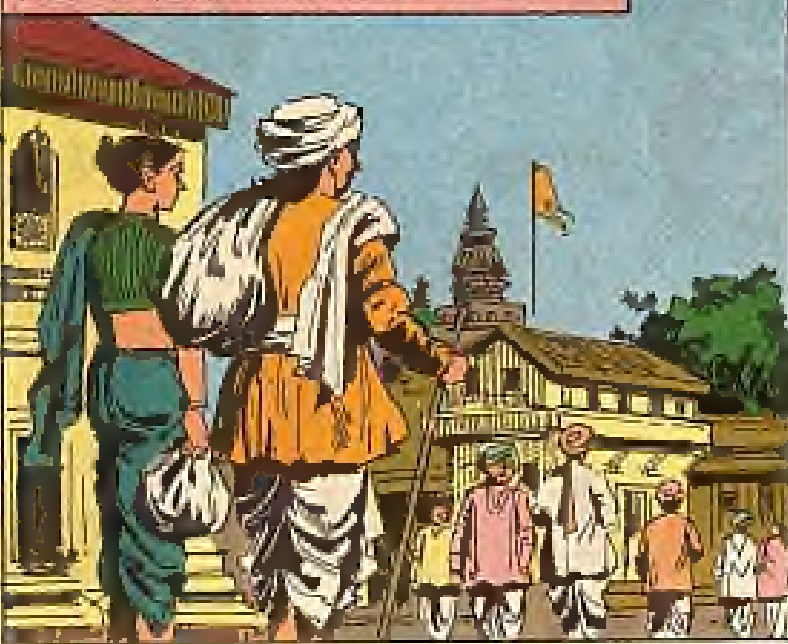
WHAT HAVE I DONE! MY PARENTS  
WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO  
REALLY CARED FOR  
ME. AND I HAVE  
DRIVEN THEM  
AWAY!

I AM A SINNER.  
I BROUGHT NOTHING  
BUT MISERY TO  
MY PARENTS.  
WILL GOD EVER  
FORGIVE ME?

I TOO WILL GO TO KASHI  
AND PURIFY MYSELF  
IN THE SACRED GANGA.  
THEN I WILL REFORM  
MYSELF. I WILL  
STOP GAMBLING  
AND START  
WORKING.



THE NEXT DAY, PUNDALIK LEFT FOR KASHI WITH HIS WIFE.



THEY HAD TO CROSS A DENSE FOREST.



I AM TIRED AND HUNGRY. I CANNOT WALK ANY FURTHER.



LET US REST HERE TONIGHT. I WILL GO AND BRING YOU SOME FRUITS AND BERRIES.

AFTER HAVING EATEN THE FRUITS AND BERRIES, PUNDALIK'S WIFE DROPPED OFF TO SLEEP, WHILE HE KEPT GUARD.



SUDDENLY—

WHAT'S THAT?  
I THINK THERE IS  
SOMETHING MOVING  
IN THE FOLIAGE.  
IS IT A WILD  
ANIMAL?





PUNDALIK GOT UP  
TO INVESTIGATE.



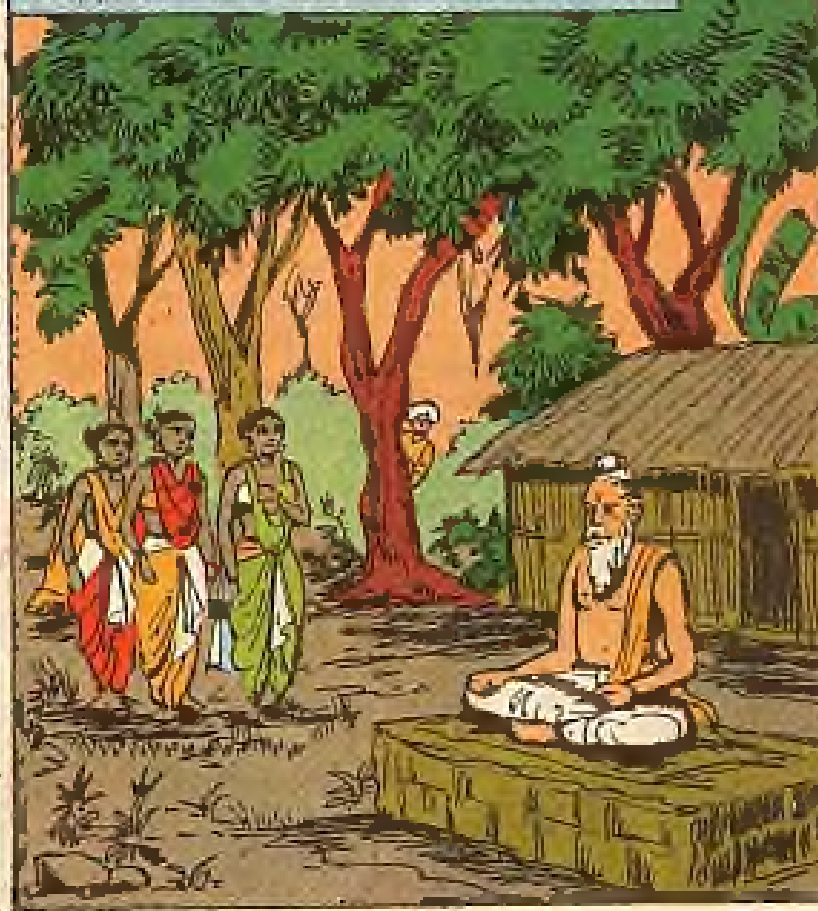
THE SOUND HAD BEEN MADE BY THREE DARK  
LADIES MOVING THROUGH THE BUSHES.



PUNDALIK FOLLOWED THEM...



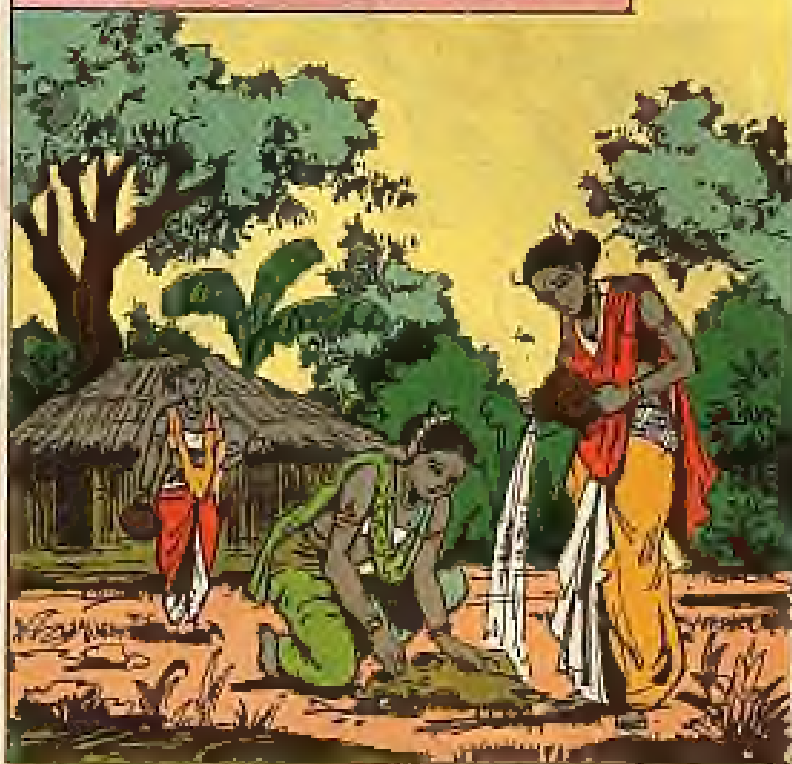
...TILL THEY STEPPED INTO A  
LITTLE CLEARING, WHERE SAGE  
KUKKUT SAT DEEP IN MEDITATION.



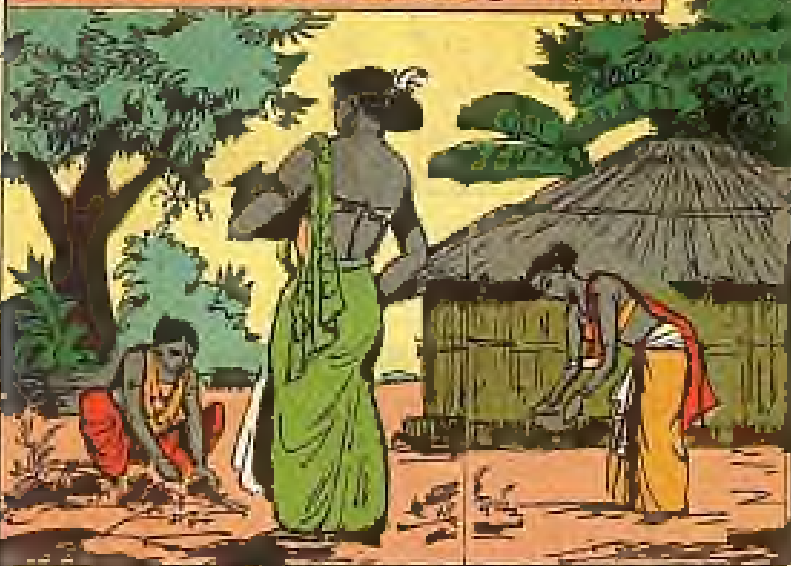
PUNDALIK HID BEHIND A BUSH  
AND WATCHED WHILE THEY  
SWEEPED THE COURTYARD CLEAN.



THEN THEY SPRINKLED SOME  
WATER ON THE GROUND...



...AND SPREAD COWDUNG ON IT.



AS THEY DID SO, A DRASTIC CHANGE  
CAME  
OVER  
THEM.



AND LO! THEY TURNED INTO LADIES,  
GLOWING WITH A UNIQUE RADIANCE.





WHEN, HAVING FINISHED THEIR  
WORK, THE LADIES BEGAN TO  
RETRACE THEIR STEPS

THEY WERE  
WALKING  
TOWARDS THE HOUSE

SO, AS THEY CAME  
STEPPED FORWARD

STAND IN OUR WAY! YOU  
ARE ONE OF THE WORST  
SINNERS IN THE WORLD.





PLEASE HAVE MERCY  
ON ME. I KNOW I HAVE  
SINNED. I AM REPENTANT.  
PLEASE TELL ME  
WHO YOU ARE

AM RIVER  
GANGA

AM RIVER  
YAMUNA

I AM RIVER  
SARASWATI



EVERY DAY COUNTLESS  
PEGRIMS COME AND  
BATHE IN THE WATERS  
AND WE BECOME DARK  
WITH THE RAINS

EVERY NIGHT WE  
COME HERE TO  
PURIFY OURSELVES

IF YOU REALLY WANT  
TO REFORM, SEEK  
THE BLESSINGS OF  
LAGE KURAN. HE  
WILL GUIDE YOU



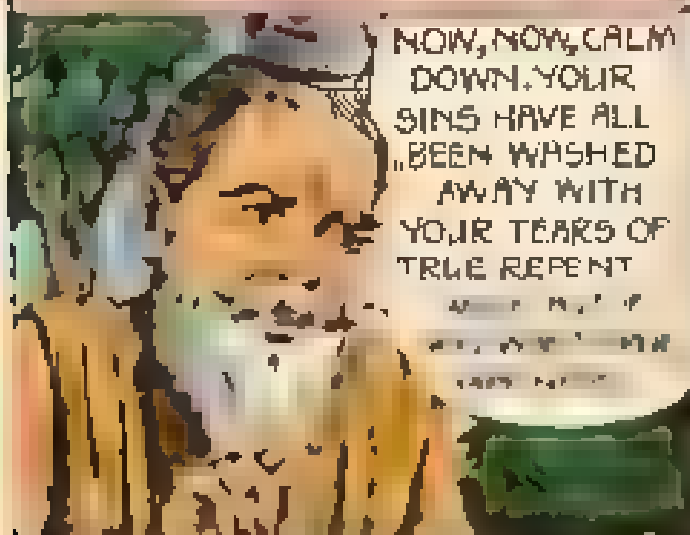
SAT PATIENTLY IN FRONT OF THE SAGE  
WHO WAS STILL DEEP IN MEDITATION.



THE SKY, KUKKUT OPENED HIS EYES



PUNDALIK COULD HARDLY SPEAK,  
BUT WITH HIS GREAT YOGIC POWERS,  
THE SAGE CAME TO KNOW EVERYTHI



NOW, NOW, CALM  
DOWN. YOUR  
SINS HAVE ALL  
BEEN WASHED  
AWAY WITH  
YOUR TEARS OF  
TRUE REPENT

JUST FIND YOUR  
PARENTS, BEG FOR  
THEIR FORGIVENESS  
AND SERVE THEM WITH  
DEVOTION. THEN  
WORSHIP THE LORD.



WHERE WERE

COME ON, WE MUST  
FIND MY PARENTS  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE



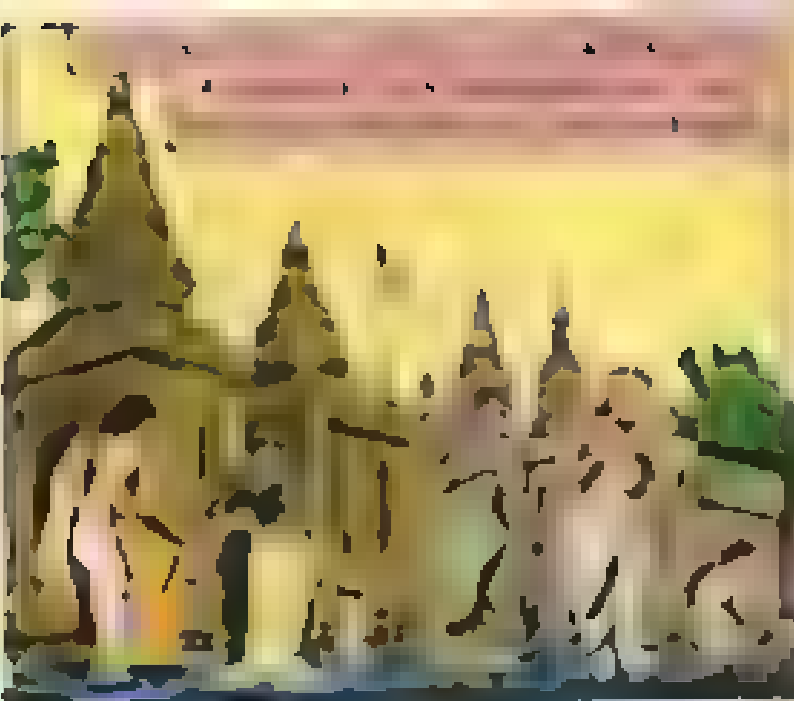
TRACE HIS PAR



GOD BLESS YOU, SON  
TODAY YOU HAVE MADE US  
TRULY HAPPY, LET  
US GO TO KASHI, AND  
OFFER OUR PRAYERS THERE.



THEY OFFERED  
PRAYERS AT THE  
TEMPLES THERE



THEN THEY TRAVELLED  
SOUTH TO PANDHARPUR



WHERE PUNDALIK  
BUILT A SMALL HUT  
FOR THEM TO STAY



HE SERVED HIS PARENTS WITH SIN-  
CERE DEVOTION AND RESPECT.



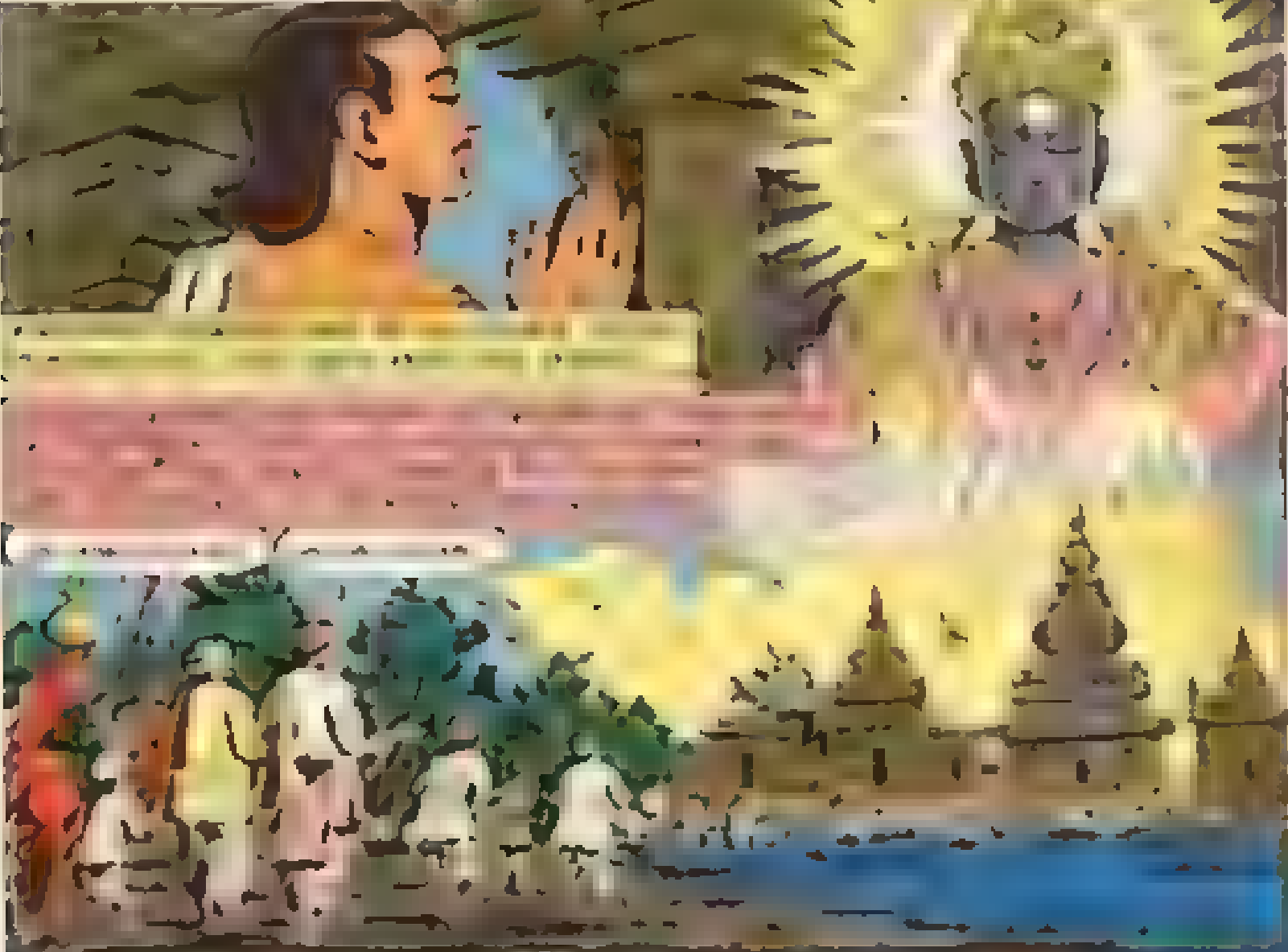
HE READ SOME HOLY BOOKS  
AND MEDITATED ON LORD



ONE AFTERNOON, AS PUNDALIK WAS BUSY PRESSING HIS FATHER'S FEET, HE HEARD SOMEONE CALL.



MY LORD. REMAIN STANDING HERE  
FOREVER. AND BLESS ALL THOSE  
WHO COME TO SEE YOU.

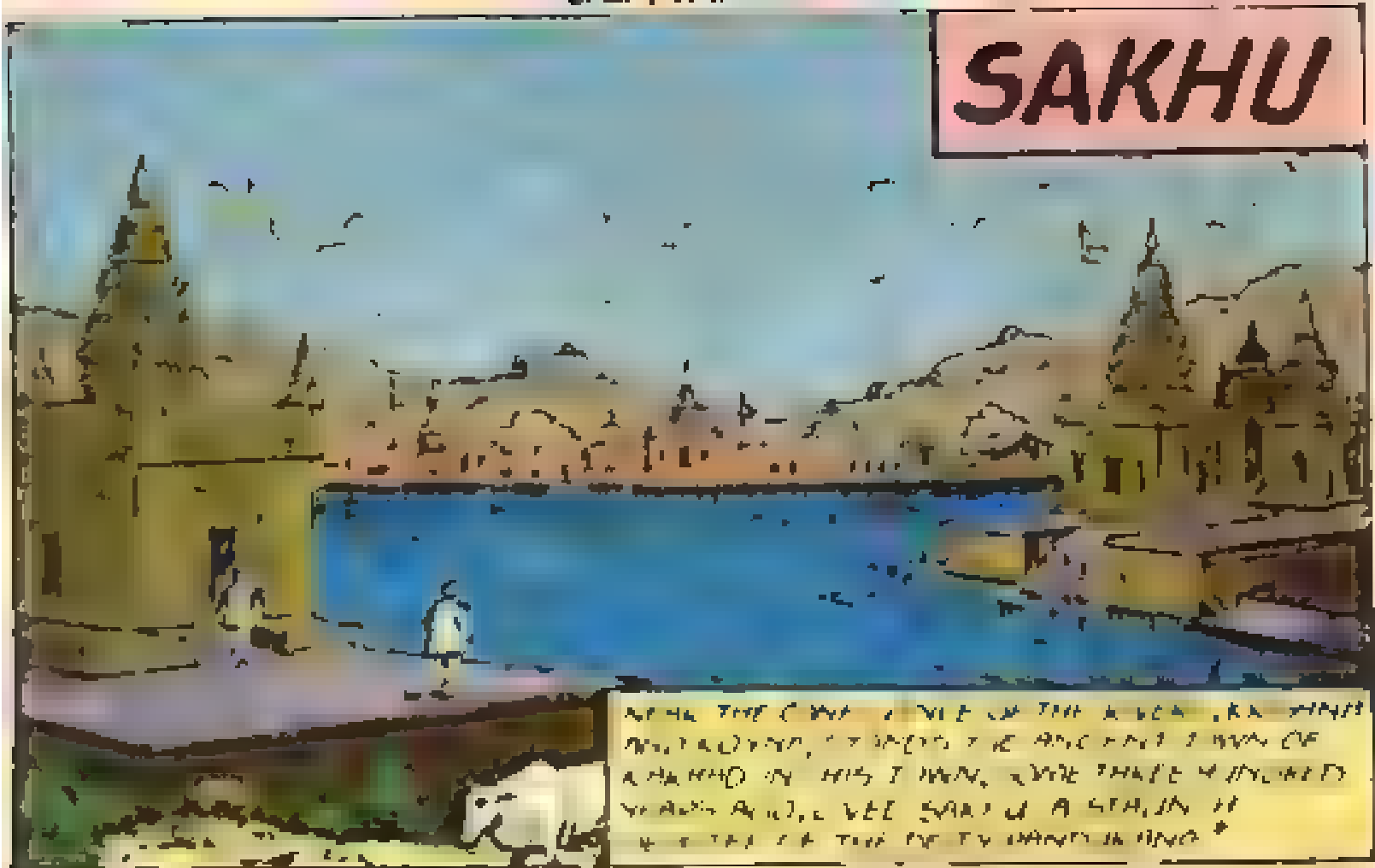


AND ADMIRATION, AS THE MAN WHO  
BROUGHT THE LORD TO PANDHARPUR.





# SAKHU



HER SISTER IN-LAW AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW HAVE NO FAITH  
IN HER PANDURANG, THOUGH SHE SAT BEFORE HIS IDOL,  
ONLY AFTER SHE HAD FINISHED ALL OTHER WORK.

MOTHER, SAKHU WASTES  
HER TIME IN OFFERING  
PUJA AND PRAYERS, AND  
I HAVE TO DO ALL THE WORK.

I'LL GET  
HER RIGHT!



YOU FOOL! WHO DO YOU  
THINK IS GOING TO  
FINISH ALL THE WORK?  
IS YOUR PANDURANG  
GOING TO COOK  
AND CLEAN  
FOR YOU?

I WILL THROW HIM  
OUT OF THIS  
HOUSE, THE  
NUISANCE!

MOTHER  
PLEASE





\* A GROUP OF PILGRIMS, SINGING AND DANCING ON A PILGRIMAGE



THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWSPAPER

AKHLI IS ON HER WAY TO PANDHARPLUR WITH A DINDI.

HE WANTS HER SHE CRY WITH MY PERMISSION



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, YOU WENT FOR NOTHING, GO AND BRING HER BACK



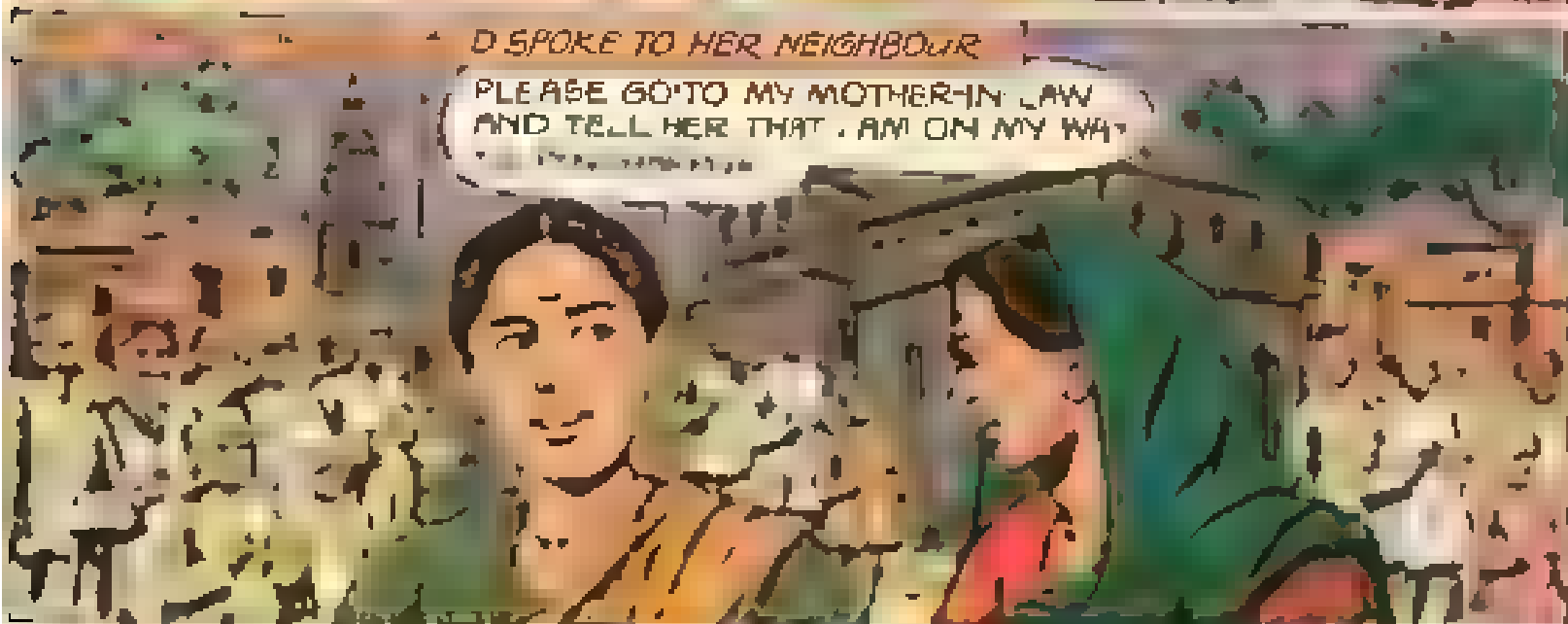
THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWSPAPER

ENOUGH OF YOUR PANDHARPLUR, YOU FEEL SHAME IN

IN MY VITHALI

(POOR GIRL)





WHEN THEY REACHED HOME

TIE HER TO  
THE PILLAR AND  
STARVE HER

NOW LET  
YOUR  
VITHAI  
HELP YOU

YOU HAVE ALL  
THE TIME TO  
WORSHIP HIM NOW

WHY, THEN, TAKE SUCH  
PAINS NOT TO GET ANYTHING  
EAT AND LET ME STARVE?

O MY LORD  
PANDURANG,  
WILL I EVER  
REACH YOU?



AS SHE CLOSED HER EYES, SHE SAW PANDURANG AND RUKMINI IN HER





CONSORT, QUESTIONED HIM.  
WHAT IS WORRYING  
YOU, MY LORD?



THEY WERE  
STANDING  
IN THE  
MIDDLE  
OF THE  
STREET



AT MIDNIGHT, PANDURANG LEFT HIS  
AKHU IN KARHAD.



LET THEM  
PLAY WITH ME  
IN THE MIDDLE



GO TO PANDHARPUR.  
TILL THE TIME  
PLACE TILL  
THE TIME



AM MY FRIEND, CANN OT  
THANK YOU ENOUGH!

THIS TIME TO LOOK LIKE SAKHU

(2) AND IN  
THE NEXT  
A

I WONDER WHO THE GOOD  
WOMAN WAS. BECAUSE OF  
HER, AT LAST I WILL BE  
ABLE TO SEE PANDURANG  
WITH MY OWN EYES.

WE HAVE TREATED  
YOU BADLY. WILL  
YOU FORGIVE US?

AM I NOT  
YOUR HALF  
COWARD?



DO NOT WISH  
TO LIVE ANY  
LONGER.



WHY, THIS IS  
OUR SAKHU  
FROM KARHAD!





THEY WERE ALL THERE FOR THE CREMATION AND LAST RITES  
OF THE DECEASED. THE PRIESTS WERE SINGING A PRAYER.

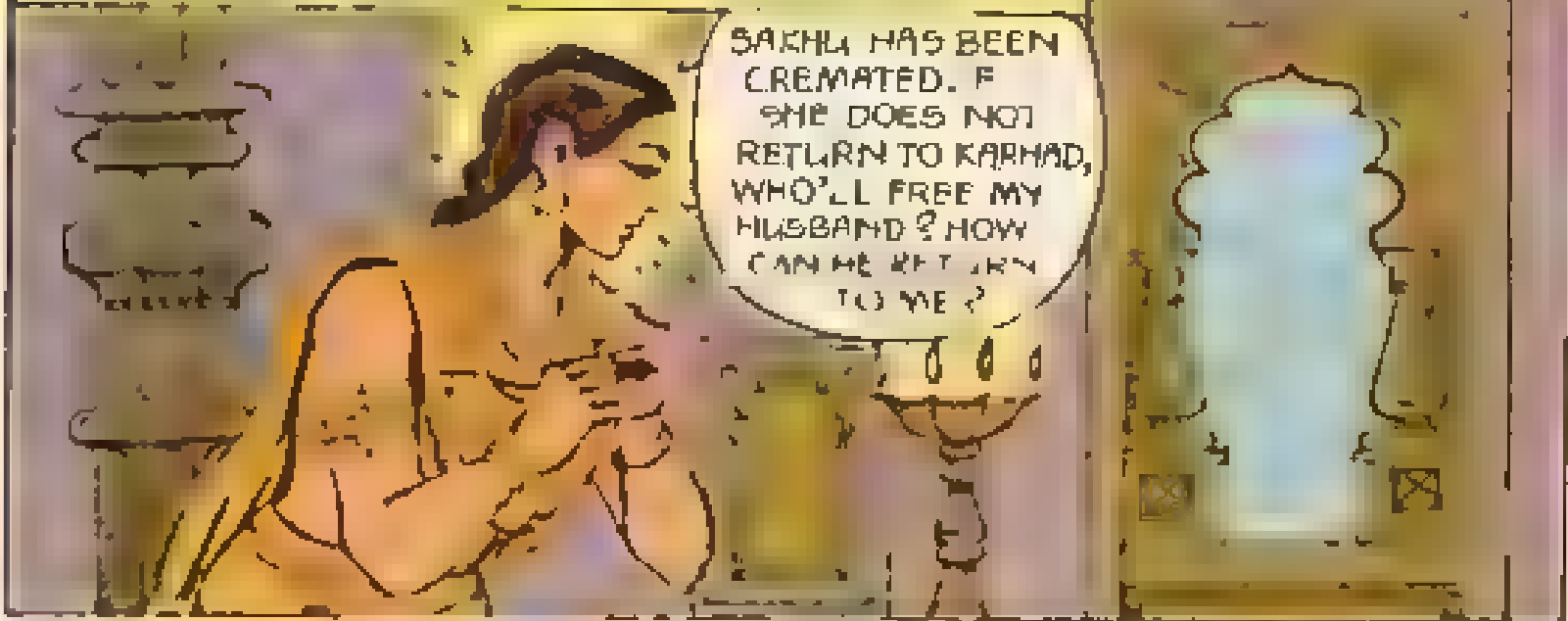
PANDURANG HARI  
VAGUDEV HARI!

JA JA, VTHAL!  
JA HARI VTHAL!



AN UNWITTING, IN THE DEATH OF A MAN, THE PRIESTS WERE SINGING A PRAYER.

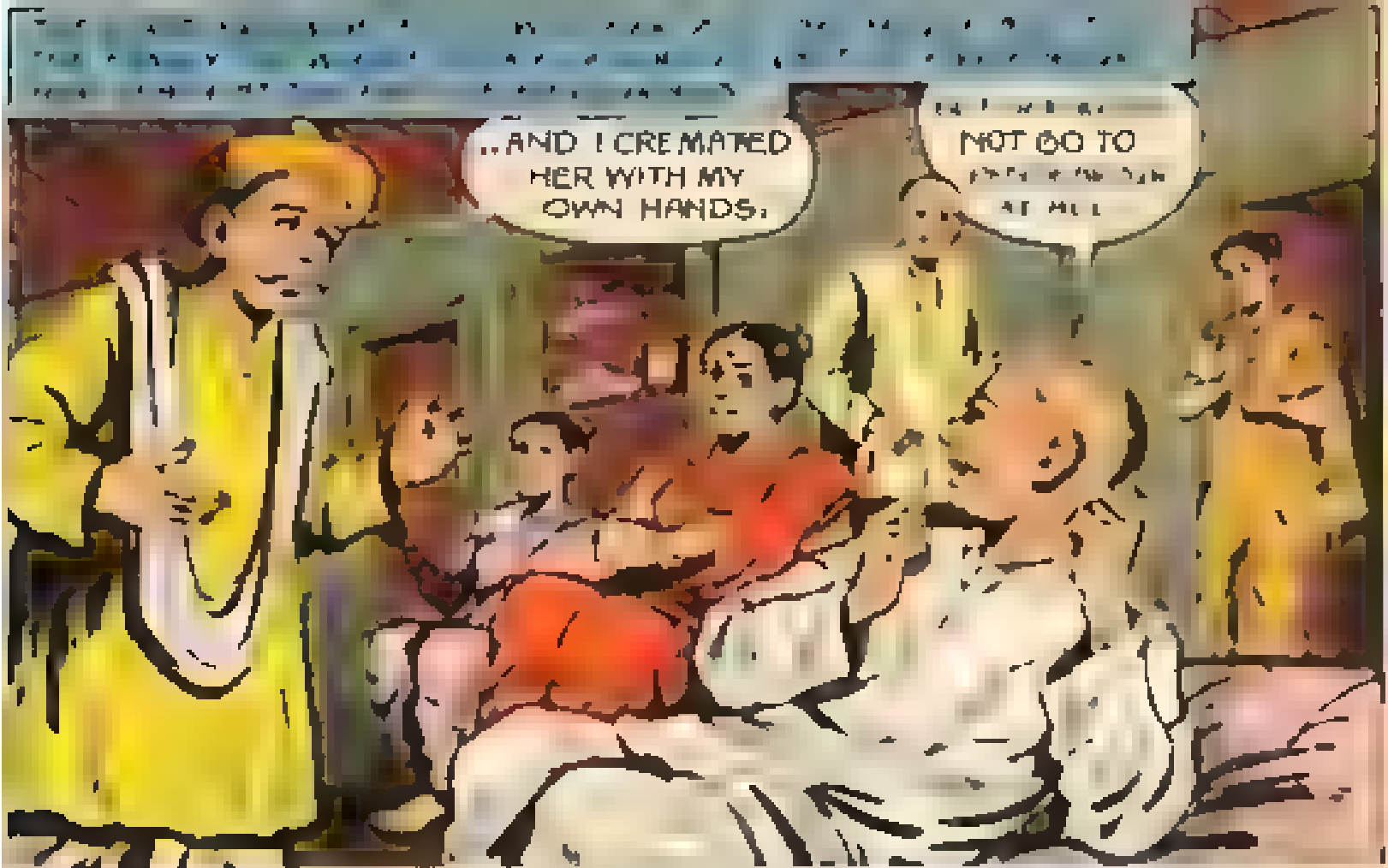
SAKHA HAS BEEN  
CREMATED. IF  
SHE DOES NOT  
RETURN TO KARNAD,  
WHO'LL FREE MY  
HUSBAND? HOW  
CAN HE RETURN  
TO ME?



RETURN TO YOUR  
PLACE AMONG  
YOUR PEOPLE

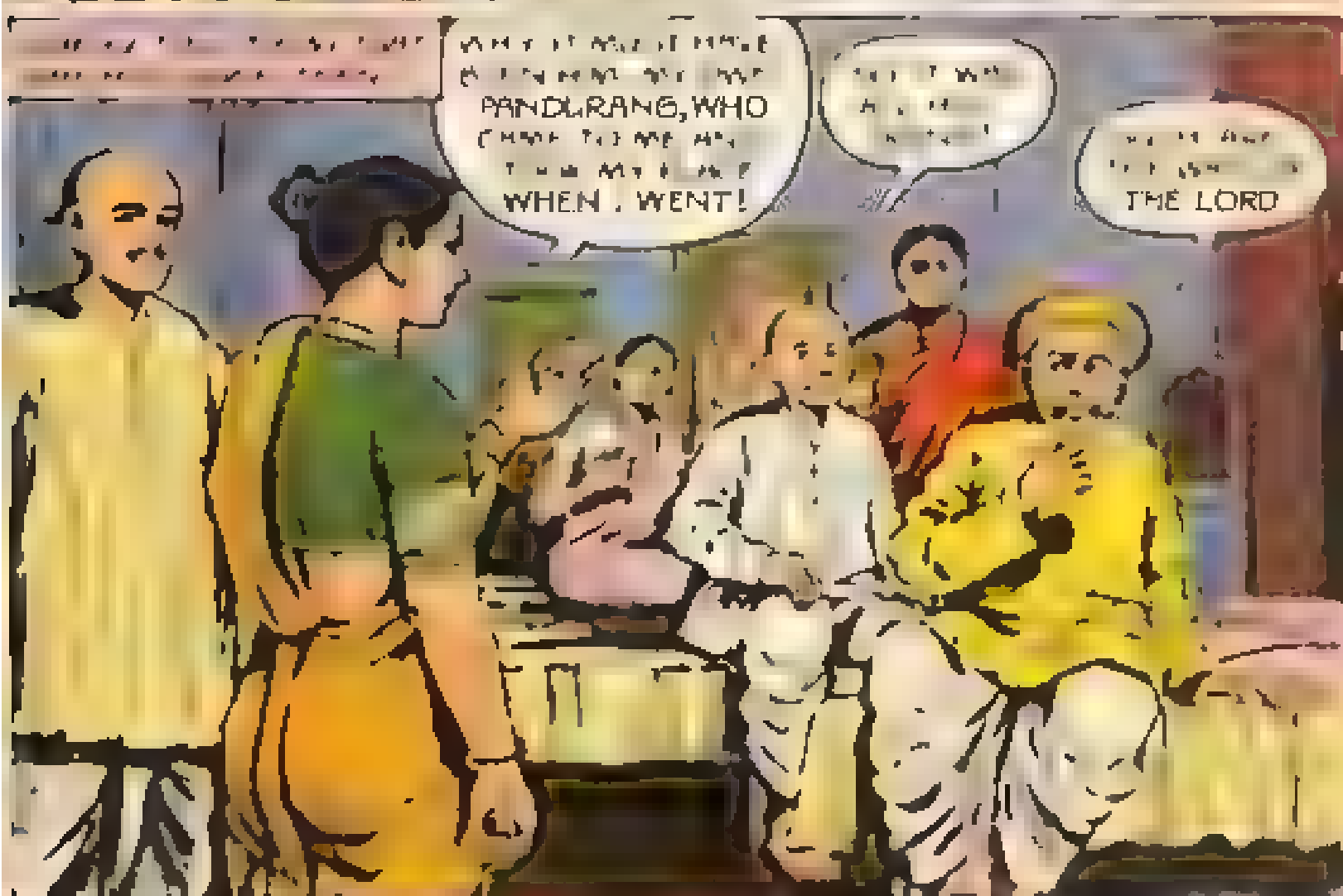






...AND I CREMATED  
HER WITH MY  
OWN HANDS.

NOT GO TO  
ANYWHERE  
AT ALL

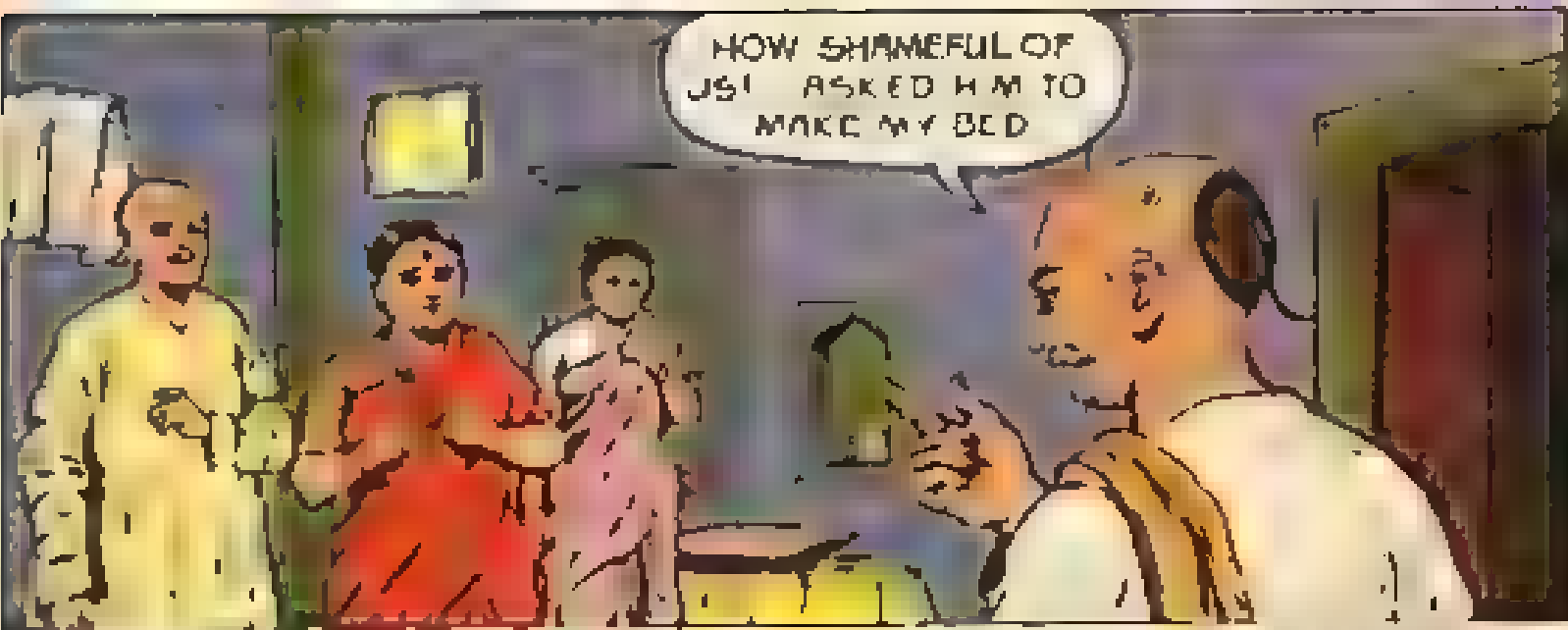


WHY IT WAS THE  
PANDURANG, WHO  
CAME TO ME AND  
TOLD ME THAT  
WHEN I WENT!

HE TOLD ME  
A LITTLE  
BIT

HE TOLD ME  
THE LORD

HOW SHAMEFUL OF  
JST ASKED HIM TO  
MAKE MY BED



ALAS I ASKED HIM  
TO WASH MY FEET  
SHAVE ON ME ILL  
NOT BE FORGIVEN

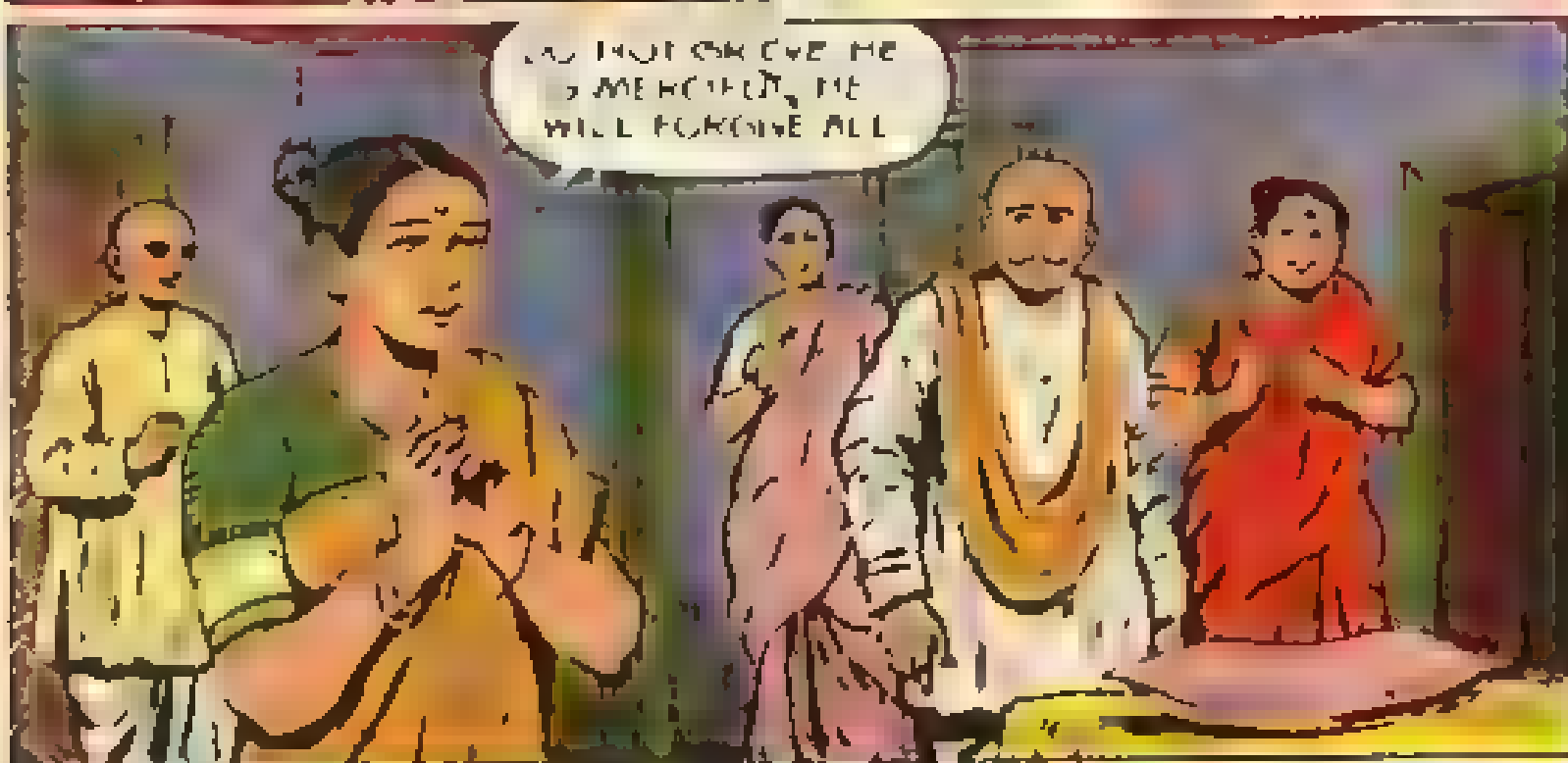


THE FOOL THAT  
I WAS I ASKED HIM  
TO PREPARE MY BATH

AND I ASKED  
HIM TO WASH  
MY HAIR



AS HE FORGAVE ME  
SOMEHOW, HE  
WILL FORGIVE ALL



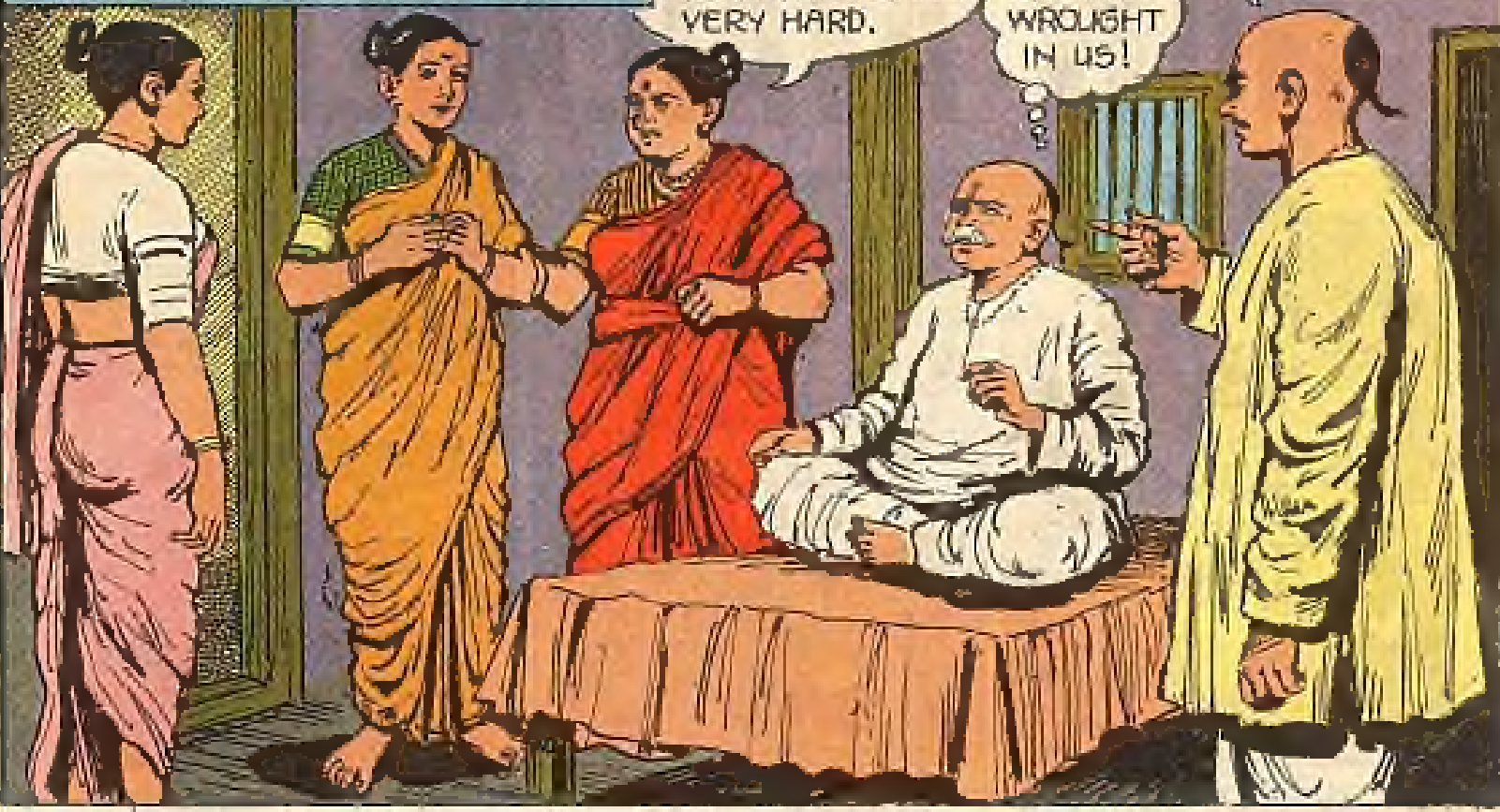


AFTER THAT, SAKHI WAS TREATED VERY RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTION-  
ATELY BY HER HUSBAND'S FAMILY.

DAUGHTER, REST  
FOR A WHILE.  
YOU HAVE WORKED  
VERY HARD.

WHAT A  
CHANGE  
SHE HAS  
WROUGHT  
IN US!

WE ARE  
PROUD OF YOU.

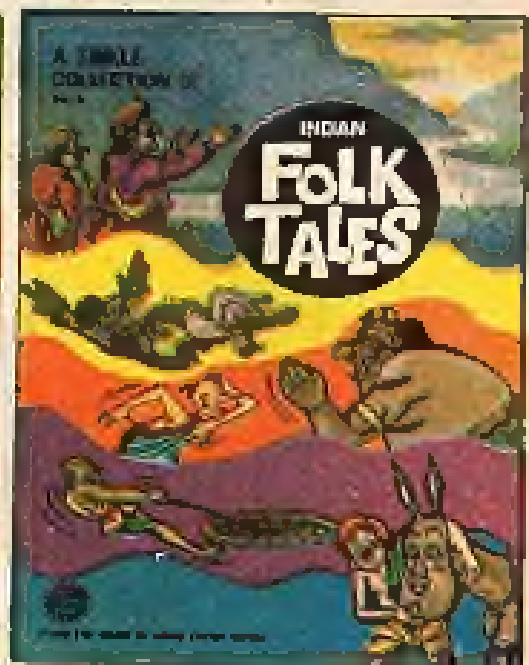
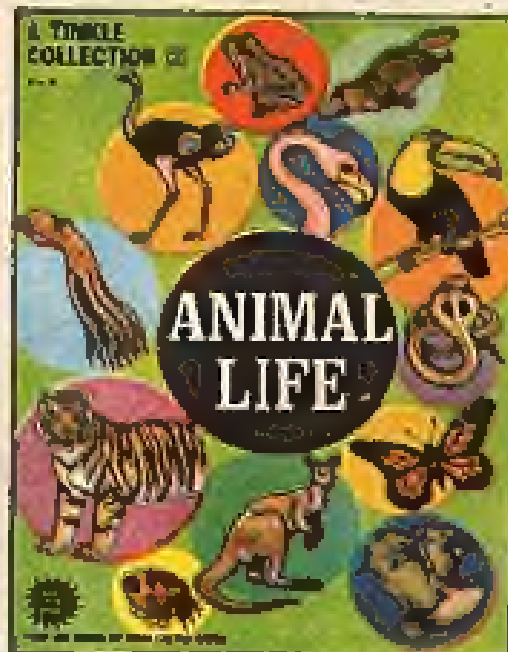
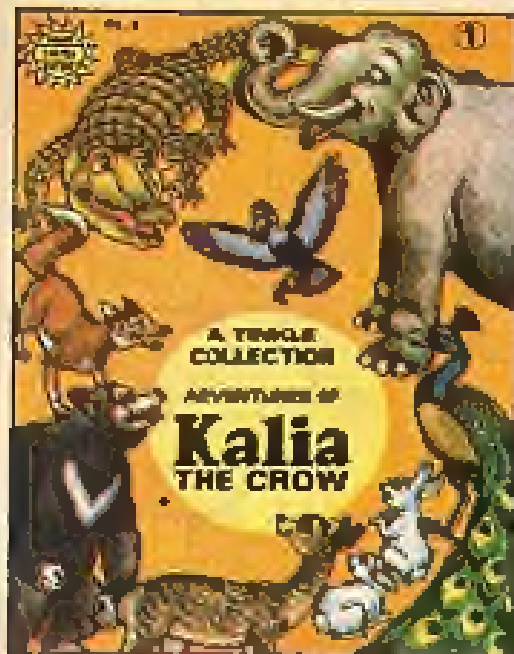


THEY TOO BECAME GREAT DEVOTEES OF PANDURANG  
AND OFTEN WENT TO HIS TEMPLE AT PANDHARPUR.

JAI VITHAL, JAI HARI VITHAL.



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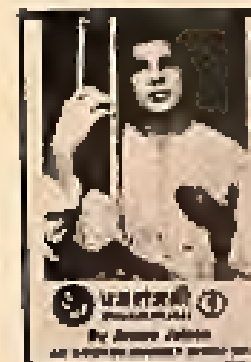
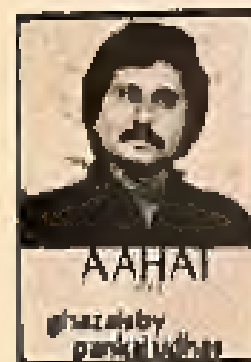


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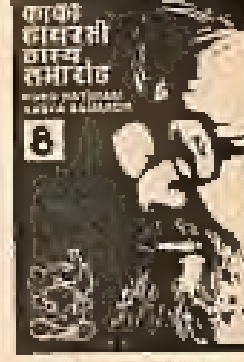


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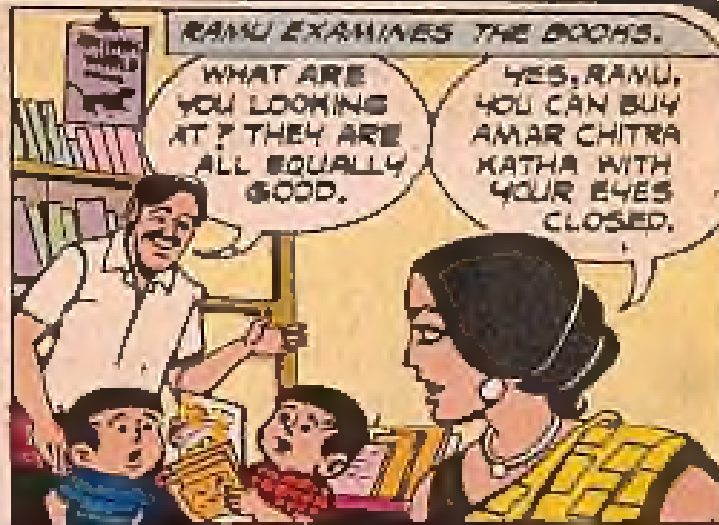
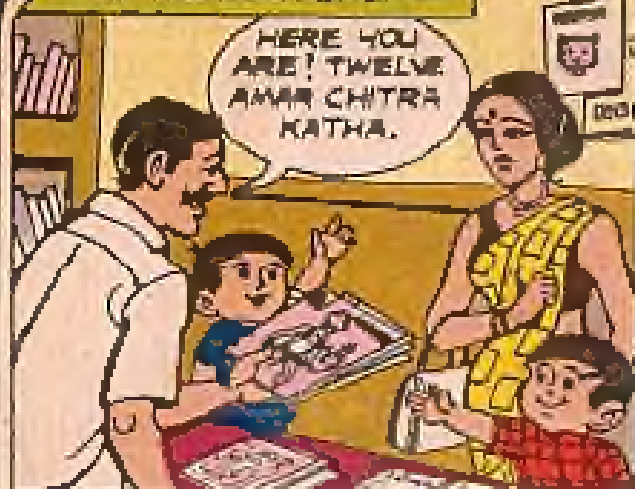
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